

Edition #1 SPRING 2010

A quarterly ecology gazette for children from NGO «ZHAVORONOK»



Welcome friends! Congratulations on receiving your first issue of children's environmental newspaper "Once."
Today you will learn from our correspondents — excellent professionals and experts on the nature of the Danube Delta.
We hope that you enjoy their articles, become friends with them, and become regular readers.
Enjoy your reading, and long live the beautiful nature of the Danube River Delta!



Stories from a Dragonfly Beauty

Let's get acquainted! I am a Dragonfly — they call me Belle. People say I am quite calm, but I can not say that is quite correct; it is only a surface appearance. In this newspaper "Odnazhdy" I will be heading a column of environmental news. I was asked to tell about myself and get acquainted with the readers, but I think that this is not worth spending time on right now. On today's agenda is a more important issue: we must save the world for Beauty that is in danger!

Plants decorate our lives. This truth becomes clear especially in the early spring, when after the winter monotony we suddenly see the snow-white flowers "spring stars" "bird's milk" and the

IN DEFENSE OF SPRING FLOWERS

purple bells of "sleep-grass." The heart of even the most rigid and strict man must tremble when he sees among the dry grass of last year the delicate flowers of fragrant violets. And what a pity that every one of us can not resist to pick these flowers, the first news of the coming warm weather.

More than twenty species of early spring flowers may disappear forever from Ukrainian territory in the coming years, if we do not suspend or outlaw the poaching and trafficking of wild flowers, especially for Valentine's Day Feb 14, and Women's Day March 8. Every spring, up to 20 million plants are destroyed in Ukraine, of which 60 % are primula (primrose); 30% shafanov (saffron); 5% belotsvetnika (snowflakes); and 5% son-travi (sleep-grass or pasque flower), ptitsemlechnika (bird's milk), cyclamen, and other flowers.

Since 2004 there have been measures in Kiev to combat the illegal sales and save the spring flowers. Druzhina Conservation, Kiev Ecological and Cultural Center, and

the police have managed to reduce the sale of flowers by 12.5 times in five years! For example: if in February-March 2004 five million flowers were sold, in 2009 only about 400 were found to be sold. Actions against illegal sales of primula were also held in Donetsk, Crimea, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kharkiv. However, little has been done in Western Ukraine, Khmelnytsky, Cherkasy, Vinnytsia, and Zhytomyr regions. In February-March 2009, entire regions of Lviv, Odessa, Uzhgorod, Vinnytsia were literally overwhelmed by bluebells.

To combat the illegal sale of spring flowers, raids were conducted where flower sales occur (subway stations pedestrian walkways, markets), and by scanning inbound trains from Crimea and Carpathian directions. Messages in defense of spring flowers also appeared in the pages of newspapers and television.

Traders and poachers take their illegal bounty primarily from the Crimea and the Carpathians.

BELOTSVETNIK

Belotsvetnik, or "summersnowflake" (Latin: *leucojum aestivum*) is a perennial plant that lives in damp, boggy places, lowlands, swamps, forests. In spring it appears toward late April - May, when the ground warms up in the marshy ground. It is widespread in western Europe, eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, and Moldova. In Ukraine, snowflakes appear in the Crimea, Transcarpathia, and in the lower reaches of the Danube. In olden times, summer snowflake was used as a condiment for food, and in folk medicines. The main reason for the disappearance of these plants is the over-picking of flowers, and digging of the bulbs. Summer snowflake is listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine, a list of endangered animals and plants of Ukraine.



"Snowflakes" spring up on the forest floor



"Birds Milk" flowers



COMMENTARY

Today we have important environmental news commentary featuring the marsh turtle 'Granny Wrinkles', the spotted gopher 'Freckles', and the dragonfly 'Belle'

Freckles: I can not imagine how one could raise a hand to pluck such beauties! Especially in such great numbers! After all, this makes an end to all that one could see in future springtimes!

Granny Wrinkles: I think that to save spring flowers, it is not enough to ban the collection and sale of these flowers. It is necessary to establish sanctuaries in areas where these plants grow.

Freckles: I agree, but the reserves will help only if the rules are strictly observed, and the area protected and monitored. That is very difficult. Where shall we find guards for such a short spring season? And how would they watch to see that everyone is not just picking a sprig?

Granny Wrinkles: Then we need to have huge fines for poaching.

Freckles: We can not hurt old women. But the old ladies selling flowers is not alone. They say, in fact, that all Odessa is littered with flowers!

Belle: Actions against the sellers is not enough. Do they not, in fact, bring flowers from the Crimea and Transcarpathia? Spring flowers will disappear for sale if people refuse to buy them.

Freckles: You say so! But who will refuse? Who can resist? First, they are unusual. Second, they have a beautiful aroma! And third, they are much cheaper than flowers in the shops.

Granny Wrinkles: zzz... zzzzzz... zzzzzz... zzzzz



Freckles: What did you say, Granny Wrinkles?

Belle: She said nothing. Granny Wrinkles is asleep and snoring. She is old and tires quickly.

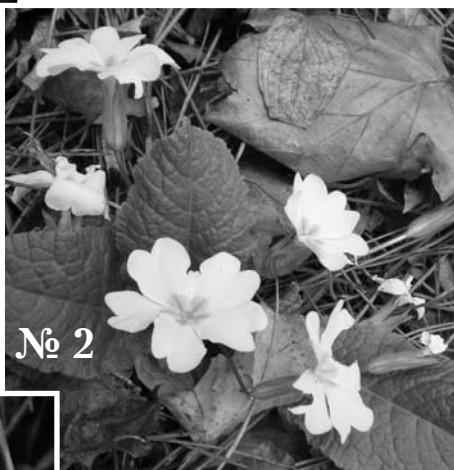
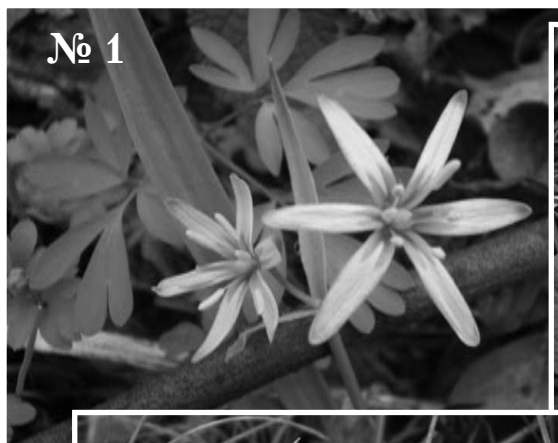
Freckles: Yes, these old ladies do not exactly stay aware. In the most crucial moment, she could fall asleep.

Belle: Do not make jokes so, Freckles! Granny Wrinkles is the former teacher of Green School! Perhaps it was she who raised the defenders of spring flowers which are now saving the flowers. Besides, it is not good to laugh at old people — who knows how you'll be in 300 years! It is good that she sleeps.

In the meantime, I know one story about spring flowers which managed to teach a lesson to a poacher, and I will tell it to you and the kids. The story is called "Spring Stars"....

(see next page)

A 'Photo Bouquet' of Spring Flowers



Photographs:

1. Lapchatka
2. Primula
3. Podснежники
4. Medunitsa
5. Krokus

SPRING STARS

Early one spring morning the little black crow Karkusha jumped on a bench and sang a song he had just come up with:

Caw! Caw! Warmth! Warmth!

*Time to take off that coat,
and heavy boots already!*

Throw open the windows!

From the entrance of a building, out comes a gloomy and disheveled red cat Boris, with a basket in his paws.

"What's the racket, stupid?" he shouted at the crow.

"Why stupid?" asked an offended Karkusha. "It is Spring. I am glad and I sing a song to Spring!"

"You are silly. You croak without a reason or benefit."

"So, I'm still young," objected Karkusha. "And for you, Boris, what is the use for you?"

"Great use — I earn money!" said Boris, and shook his basket.

"Money?" said a surprised Karkusha.

"How do you do that? Have the mice begun to trade?"

"No, I now have a special Spring business," smiled the cat. Screwing up his eyes, he examined Karkusha. "Want to be my companion, to earn a little money?"

"Sure!" said Karkusha, gladly. "What

should I do?"

"Fly...if you have not forgotten how, over the winter."

"You say, with you, too?"

"Yes, fly with me!" commanded Red Boris, and he climbed on from the fence.

So over walls, through yards and gardens, over the roofs of buildings and barns, Karkusha brought Boris to the outskirts of the city. And then, with a basket pulled on his head so as not to interfere with his running, Boris stared off on a gallop to a nearby forest.

In the forest, Red Boris stopped, took off the basket, and waited for Karkusha who had fallen behind. He ordered:

"Now fly over the woods and as soon as you see flowers, croak! Loud! So I can hear!"

"Flowers?" said Karkusha, again surprised. "There are flowers already?"

Red Boris grinned: "For a long time now! I have sent three full baskets to the market already. Now they are a very good deal. But without an assistant, it is difficult to gather. During the day all paws are busy. But now, with you, we can handle this job quickly and then I'll buy you ice cream. Okay?"

"Ice Cream! In a cone?! Okay!!"

Jumping for joy, Karkusha flew over the trees and began circling over the forest, looking at the forest floor. And suddenly he saw something varicolored with red, blue and black spots.

"Caw! Caw! Caw!" croaked the glad Karkusha.

"I'm coming!" yelled the cat. Karkusha came down where Red Boris was, on the grass.

"Where?" asked Boris. "Where are the flowers?"

"Here," nodded the crow at a bright spot, sprinkled



Beautiful Spring Stars

with last year's leaves.

"Who have I gotten myself mixed up with!" said Boris angrily. "That's not a flower; it's an old chocolate wrapper!"

"Sorry, Boris, it was shiny," Karkusha tried to justify himself.

"Okay," Boris grumbled. "Fly farther. Just be more careful!"

Karkusha again rose into the sky. Now he flew slowly, and carefully examined old leaves and bare earth. But no flowers did he see.... only discarded cans and bottles sparkled in the sun, and bits of plastic bags hung on the bare branches of bushes.

Suddenly, in one grassy area, Karkusha saw white stars. Fearful of once again being mistaken, he sank down — and then his heart beat joyfully. There amongst last year's old grasses grew flowers: thin green stems adorned with pretty white flowers. The flowers swayed and sang a spring song:

"Ding-Dong! It's warm! It's warm!

Snow came down for a long time!

Now the flowers grow

Sun, sing a song!"

"Hello, little Spring Stars! Aren't you beautiful! And I am a bird named Karkusha."

"Look! Look! Another flower has awakened as the crow-bird has woken up! What, is he funny? But how nice!

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"SPRING STARS"

Sing louder! We'll wake up the whole forest!" Glad to see someone, the little white flowers once again began to sing their song.

"Who are you talking to?" Karkusha suddenly heard a voice above his head — the red cat Boris. "Yes, you fellow! You found flowers! Why did you not call?"

Boris reached for the white heads with a fluffy claw.

"Do not touch them, Boris! They are alive! They know how to sing!" shouted Karkusha.

"Flowers should grow so that they can be picked and sold on the market, but not to sing," Boris laughed. Pushing Karkusha aside, he began to pluck the tender stems and throw the flowers in a basket.

"Do not push me! These are Snow Stars!" wept Karkusha. "Do not pick them, please, Boris!"

But Red Boris did not pay any attention to Karkusha. He threw all the flowers in the basket and went to the city. Karkusha remained sitting in the empty meadow. Tears grew. But that would not help, so Karkusha wiped his beak with a wing and flew home.

At home, his mom Clara (who is a respected wise crow) made pancakes. She listened carefully to her weeping son and said: "There can be only one response."



Clara spent quite a while explaining something to Karkusha, but when she was through, he jumped up and down with excitement. Then the young crow flew to the market.

Red Boris had separated his white flowers into bunches, spread them out on display, and had begun trading.

"Early spring flowers! Primroses! Buy a spring delicacy!"

Two girls approached Boris and began to choose bunches.

"Take it!" invited the red cat. "Fresh flowers, just picked."

"Yes," confirmed Karkusha. "He just stopped the whole meadow from blooming. Now these flowers are dead. When they were alive they sung so beautifully! But Red Boris does not regret this. He needs money! He has a 'Spring Business'!"

The girls looked closely at Karkusha and the cat ... and then put the flowers back in the basket and left.

"What are you chattering about? You want to discourage customers?" said an angry Boris.

"How much are the flowers?" a tall guy asked Boris.

But no sooner had Boris started to open his mouth and answer than

Karkusha jumped and shouted:

"Do not buy his flowers! He picked everything in the forest glade! Now it is empty except for some rusty cans lying around! If you buy his bunch today, tomorrow he will destroy the whole forest! He will not spare money for the sake of the Spring Stars!"

That man also left, without buying flowers. A lot of people came to him, but after hearing Karkusha's story, nobody wanted to buy. Boris cursed and chased Karkusha, and changed his place in the market. But the crow followed Red Boris' tail like a shadow, and called:

"Do not buy spring flowers from this poacher! Boris killed the Spring Stars! He broke these tender little bits of spring, for the money!"

By evening, Red Boris still had traded no flowers. Tired and angry, he returned home with a full basket of wilted flowers. And the next morning, when Boris came out of the door with an empty basket, he found all the cats assembled from all over the neighborhood.

"Throw away that basket!" shouted Murzik, who was holding in his paws a big poster with crooked letters that said "Let the flowers grow!" and "Boris — kaput!"

Red Boris looked at the assembled Spring Star-defenders, threw the basket, and returned to his house.

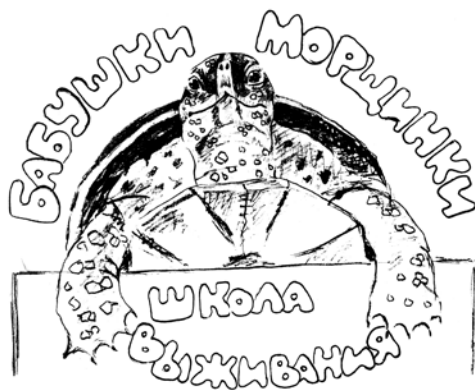
Dragonfly Belle: That's the whole story, kids! In parting, I'll give you words of advice for spring, from that wise crow Aunt Clara ...



"Do not buy primula
no matter how beautiful
and inexpensive!
Do not let dishonest
citizens have the
opportunity to profit
by devastating the beauty
of our land!"



DELICIOUS FOOD FROM ... REEDS?



School of Survival with Granny Wrinkles

Dear children! (Excuse me for calling you that, but everyone is a child to me because of my age — a long time has passed in my 300 years.) All call me "Grandmother Wrinkles" although my real name is Nymph Tinovna. My hobby is collecting anti-wrinkle creams. I have 1002 bottles in my collection. Every day I open one of them, admire them, sniff them ... but wrinkles, alas, do not disappear. But enough about that! In my youth in the country's wetlands, I worked in a Green School, where reading is the most important subject so that we can learn to survive in nature without the advancements of civilization. I love to cook delicious dishes from unusual wild plants. Do you want to learn? Then let's get on with the Survival School lesson.

Today I will introduce you to one of the most numerous inhabitants of our wetlands - reeds. Meet the reed, find its many uses, and try to prepare a meal from my recipes. Believe me, reeds are very, very helpful and very, very tasty.

If you only knew how wonderful the reeds are that grow in our marshes! They cast a high solid wall, but when the wind blows, the cane leaves turn their edge and the stem bends easily, but does not break. Reeds are flexible and very durable! They can be used to build houses and shelters.

For many animals, the reeds are home. How many spiders, bees and insects are found in the crooks of the cane stalks! They like reed thickets, as do muskrats and pelicans, herons and ibis. Also, wild cats, wild boar, and raccoon dogs.

Birds hide in the reeds, and fish. The "White Cupid", for example, loves the sweet tender tip of the cane. Since she

cannot reach the tip, she grabs the lower branches of the stem with her mouth and pulls it up so the top will not fall into the water.

I must say this one is no fool. Reeds are not only tasty, but also useful. In the reed leaf and shoots is contained up to 500 mg. of ascorbic acid which is four times the vitamin C in lemons! Reeds are rich in carotene, cane sugar, and starch. The rhizome (root bulb) is especially high in nutrient value, containing up to 15% sugar and 50% starch. That is why long young shoots and rhizomes of reeds are used as food. They can be boiled, pickled, included in soups, salads, vinaigrettes, purees, and stewed with butter. Autumn and spring rhizomes that are dried, milled and made into flour can be cooked for coffee, baked as bread, and used as a seasoning for various dishes. I think it is high time to introduce reed dishes in your diet! Try to cook the recipes in the next column.

Rhizomes are not difficult to collect in the spring or early summer before the reeds flower, and in late autumn from the bottom of reservoirs with rakes or special hooks. But before you start cooking dishes from the reeds, you must perform important rule of survival school:

Remember! Collect reed rhizomes and young shoots only far away from towns, factories and plants!

Another set of useful substances is contained in reeds, but still poorly understood by scientists; the knowledge remains to be grasped. Reeds have been a Chinese medicine since ancient times, where this plant was used as an effective antipyretic, choleric, antiemetic, and diuretic. Vitamin extracts are produced from the young shoots...

.... ZZZZZ ZZZZZ
ZZZZZ

*Editor's note:
Excuse us — Granny
Wrinkles has gone to sleep!
Nothing can be done
about this ...
her great age takes over!*



Reed Root Salad

300g. reed roots, 60g. grated horseradish, 60g. chopped sorrel, 40g. sour cream, salt to taste

Wash the roots and boil in salted water. With a knife, chop into 2 cm. pieces, stir in horseradish, sorrel and salt, then add the sour cream.

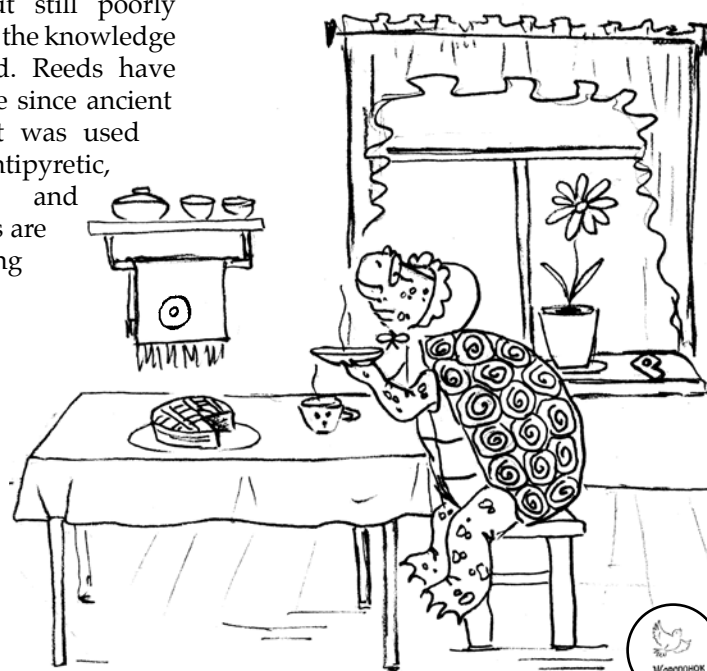
Reed Root Puree

200g. reed roots; 60g. nettle; 60g. onion (10-20); vegetable oil; salt and vinegar to taste

Boil the reed roots and finely chop in a meat grinder. Fry the onions and nettles in oil, then add the chopped reeds. Flavor with vinegar and salt.

Reed Root Coffee

Wash the reed roots and air dry, then roast in oven until brown. Grind the toasted pieces in a coffee grinder and use like regular ground coffee.





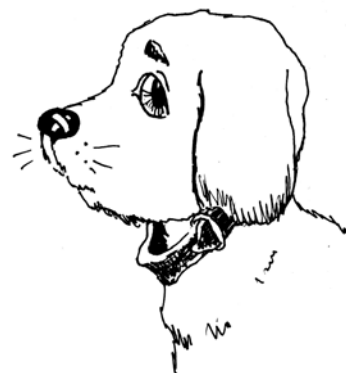
Whiskers, Tails, and Paws

Hello, dear reader! I am eagerly waiting for you on this page, and I'll tell you about my friends that have whiskers, tails, and paws! I'd like you to become our friend. You have no whiskers and no tail... but I see you have legs and hands that could easily pass for a paw!



This is I! My name is Athos. I love sausages and can not stand it when there is teasing with the neighbor's cat Ginger.

This is Marcela — the most beautiful cat in our yard. Yes, we have a yard: our entire street. She is capricious and spoiled, but all is forgiven when anyone sees her beautiful blue eyes and white fur.



This is Bulka. His black, wet nose appears wherever possible. Soon Bulka will be a hunting dog and will watch chickens while they sleep in their cage.



This is my friend, Murzik. He has no master. Murzik lives in the basement. It is fun to catch mice and rats. During these chases Murzik respects the residents, and in turn they invite him into their pantries.

This old cat's name is Microscope. He lives in our building with a professor. At one time Microscope had lived in Odessa, and his professor went to work in the University and gave lectures to students. In the evenings in their Odessa apartment, Microscope met professors and students. They always discussed and argued about things. Microscope listened and became the most educated cat. He knows very complex words, such that you have never heard uttered by a cat!



This cat, Red, lives next door. Every morning he does exercises on the balcony because he wants to be like his master, the Sea Captain. Red likes to tease and ruin the birds' nests. I often run and play with him. He's strong, and always beats me, because I'm not doing morning exercises.



Whiskers, Tails and Paws:

THE DIARY OF "BIG EARS"

Not far from our house, in the bushes, I found someone's diary. Microscope immediately recognized the blue notebook and pencil: he had lost them when we were learning to ride a bike. But he had nothing to rejoice about — it was still a loss! The whole notebook had been written over with someone's tiny handwriting, as a diary. And the pencil remaining was only a small stub. Here are the entries:

Monday. Today we became one more. The Newcomer is terribly funny. He cannot see or hear. I do not pay attention, so he will not be a bother.

Tuesday. The rain is falling. Mom flies and almost swims through the amazing drops. We are wet but warm, as all of us are very close. But here is The Newcomer, huddled under our feet and clinging. He looks frozen.

We sat by the cat on the roof and discussed who might have penned these records. Initially, we suspected Murzi, as he had liked this notebook of Microscope's very much. But just looking at the entries, we realized that he had nothing to do with it. It was written so correctly, with no errors — and Murzik does not know how to write. Neither does Red. So they were eliminated. Likewise, Marcela: she would have never thought of this idea, to keep a diary.

Wednesday. What a tasty mouse! For the first time I ate it whole, without even biting it into pieces. Dad smiled at me and called me a "real wildcat", and promised to offer more. They are not very large.

Sunday. The Newcomer opened his eyes. In my opinion, he had already heard us talking about him. Today I, Sharp Beak, and Yellow Eyes nearly came to blows because of the food. Mice were few, and we left nothing for The Newcomer. He was hungry.

Thursday. Mama said that I have now become an adult. I have these feathers. I am tired of being a plaything, like The Newcomer.

Microscope had long waved his paw at the loss of his notebook and pencil. And now, he was not at all upset. Besides, his boss bought him another notebook, in which our old friend had copied down his

clever cat's thoughts. But the thoughts in this notebook were clever too, and did not belong to the cat ... although the owner of these records several times called himself a "flying cat."

Friday. The Newcomer wants to eat. And we do too. So mum and dad went hunting very early in the evening. And then they came to us: guests in black-and-gray robes! I am not



afraid of them, although they were as tall as me. I do not like the visitors. They wanted to take The Newcomer, but I did not give him up, and we did not want to go with them. Together we have driven them away. It turns out The Newcomer is a great fighter. Good! However, alone, without me, he would not be able to cope with them.

Again Friday. I like to swing my wings. They have feathers. True! Yellow Eyes requests that I have not asked. I did not ask. I'm glad! Better she does not envy me.

We sat and wondered who would want to give us this diary, and suddenly a shadow flew right over us. There was a silhouette of a bird — but no one heard the noise of wings. The shadow flitted over us, completely silent.

"Ghost!" Marcela screamed, and we

ran away, screaming and squealing, in different directions. A few minutes later, the shaking company gathered in my apartment. Having run from fear, we more carefully examined these small straight lines, as if laid out in a number of grains. This diary is dangerous! We became even more scared.

Saturday. Pop said that we needed to train my wings more. Soon I would be allowed to leave the house. I felt cramped and bored. And instead of me, the highest flyer remains Yellow Eyes. She is indeed a girl, but bold. In addition, a few days ago she also became a real "wildcat" as I had once — the first time she swallowed a whole mouse.

Wednesday. The Newcomer loves me. When frightened, he presses close to me, and I feel strong and brave.

Thursday. This evening, the parents again went hunting very early in the twilight and another guest came. But he did not want to take anyone away with him; he was small, drab, puny. He had very nice singing! But when he saw us, took fright and flew away.

Friday. Today I left the house. Noone said goodbye. It all happened suddenly. I readied my wings at the edge of the nest, and looked, and looked down.... And then jumped, and flew down to the ground. Great!

Saturday. I'm hungry and called mother. She flew in and fed me. And then my father brought me a few mice. I miss The Newcomer. I was a bit scared, especially when something sniffed. I pecked a furry creature directly in his long snout. It screamed and ran away.

"I know this furry creature with a long snout!" cried Marcela. "This is our puppy Bulka! He recently ran home with a bloody nose! He hid in his hut and kept silent the whole day. I saw him from the balcony. Maybe he smelled the ghost. You know, he is curious."

"I'll bring him," said Murzik, and armed against the ghost with a heavy cast iron frying pan, he set out to find Bulka.

Bulka immediately began defending himself: he was not biting anyone, but only smelled a kind of bird.

"Are you sure it was a bird?" we asked the puppy.

"Maybe it was a ghost?" suggested Murzik.

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"The Diary"

"Would I smell some kind of ghost?" asked an offended Bulka. "It was a bird — a little owl, with big ears on his head. They nest in the old park. I often go running there, and all of them know." "And by the smell you can determine whose notebook this is?" asked Microscope of Bulka. "Of course I can! I'm still a hunting dog!" snorted Bulka.

He sniffed the notepad and pencil, and then said:

"This thing belongs to Ushastik, who bit my nose."

"Can you find him?"

"What, would I get another bite on the nose?" joked Bulka, satisfied that he was not being abused.

Ushastik, we have not found. It is evident that he has already learned to fly, and to hunt at night.

After this story, Microscope did not leave the library of his professor for a few days in a row.

"He is worried about hiding from ghosts," laughed Red.

But I know that he is reading a book about OWLS. He was not afraid of ghosts because he knew that Ushastik and his parents were ordinary eared owls. This is also what Bulka said, and we believe him. He is still a hunting dog, and not some kind of mongrel. He knows what he is talking about!

Notes from Microscope

When Marcela screamed "Ghost!" I, along with the others, fled from the roof like a little kitten. But my professor said that we should never be ashamed of the fact there is something we may not know, because to all know is impossible. Rather, be ashamed of laziness and unwillingness to learn.



So I was not lazy. I rummaged through the entire library and found a lot of interesting information about eared owls. They can be described only with delight!

BEHOLD: THE EYES!

The huge yellow eyes of owls and the unusual location of the so-called facial disk attach great expressiveness of these birds. If you look at an owl's eyes you can see if it is frightened or surprised, annoyed or pleased. However, the main task of an owl's eye is not to make a point. These huge eyes are binoculars to help the owl see in pitch darkness, when there is illumination as little as 0.000002 lux (A bright midday sun illuminates the earth with a force of 100 thousand lux!). In the dark, owls see 450 times better than man!

Some allege that in the daytime owls can not see, or are blind. Not so! Even in the daytime they can see better than people. Moreover, the unusual owl eyes can look at the bright dazzling sun, and distinguish the silhouettes of birds soaring in the daytime sky.

[The only thing that owl eyes do not know how to do is "ogle". How does our dear, fair Marcela feel about that?]

Also, these huge owl eyes cannot turn or roll; the whole head must turn. Another "defect" is their farsightedness. Anything done directly under the nose of an owl, (that is, the beak), it can not see. But do not seek to interfere with their business, because owls have remarkable hearing.

BEHOLD: THE EARS!

With acute vision, owls also have excellent hearing, 50 times better than humans. The owl can hear the squeak of a mouse under masses of snow half a meter deep. Yes, there are mice squeaking under there! I found a description in literature of a blind owl that could hear the fingers bend on a man's hand! He could also hear the muscles working in arms, and a strained tendon!

By the way, the nice big round ears on the head of the Long-Eared Owl is only decoration. These are no relation to ear shells; they do not have such things. Sound arrives in the owl's ears through the feathers of the facial disc; sound rolls in through the ear hole. Look at those feathery ears on her head: just a decoration!

BEHOLD: THE NECK!

The owl's head is very mobile. Because the owl is not able to rotate the eyes, owl has to rotate the entire head in order to see and hear better. And she does it beautifully. Not one of us — not cats, not people, no one else — can turn a head around its axis by 180 degrees. But the owl can. And not only 180 degrees around, but even 210 ... and some species of owls can turn as much as 270 degrees!

BEHOLD: EDUCATION!

In owls' nests, the arrival and growth of the chicks is always uneven. This happens because the mother owl lays eggs and hatches them gradually over time, not all at once. It is very efficient. While the parents are flying in search of food, the older chicks hatch the newer eggs and keep the toddlers warm, as well as protect them from uninvited guests such as crows ... which are not averse to eating baby owls!



First of April : International Day of Birds



"Miscellaneous" from Freckles

Hi! I am Freckles the Spotted Gopher. I live in Burrow #135 in the vicinity of Lake Katlabuh. I was invited to this post of correspondent because I always know everything! Today I'll tell you about the festival dedicated to birds. Though they are very beautiful creatures, and I respect them, I should note that gophers and ground squirrels are still the most wonderful, intelligent, neat, clever and beautiful inhabitants of the Danube Delta. I think it unfair that people still can not come up with holiday for gophers. How beautiful it sounds: "International Day of The Speckled Gopher"! Evidently, the organization of this festival should take it in their paws. In the meantime let's talk about birds.

APRIL 1 is the INTERNATIONAL DAY OF BIRDS

Do you know why the bird is so popular among people, and gophers are not? Because they have mastered the airspace, and in that they have no equal. Birds can fly! Gophers, unfortunately, can fly only in dreams.

Man, looking at the birds, has always dreamed of flying. What do you think a gopher dreams, when he is in his hole? Of course, of flight! That one could jump, flap the legs, and fly to the sun, to surprise him with our speckles! This is what gophers dream. Sorry, I digress.

Man has created many vehicles for the air, but none of his flying structures

can be compared with the natural aircraft of birds. Birds can overcome the vast distances without rest or food, and whatever the weather. I am particularly surprised by the ability of birds to fly day and night without a break for lunch or snacks. Not a grain! Neither stem nor leaf!

Birds regulate the number of the most common creatures on earth - insects. Simply put, birds love to eat insects. And the appetite for them, I tell you, is quite decent. So decent, that watching the starlings hunt in the wilderness, I have often thanked the Creator that I am a spotted gopher, not a locust or a fly.

Birds are involved in spreading the seeds of many plants. And they do this — I will tell you a secret — in the most indecent manner. If a gopher was flying, even in a dream, it would be a romance. For birds, this is just ho-hum usual activity. So, having eaten their fill of berries, fruits and seeds of various plants, during the flight they allow themselves (excuse me!) to empty their bowels right on someone's head! Well, if all does not fall on a suitable head, then on the ground, where seeds can germinate and give life to new plants.

And... birds adorn the planet with their singing and beautiful colors. I hear the May nightingale, thrushes, starlings.... They are masters of song!

There is no gentle whistle of gophers that can compare with their singing, I admit.

I also recognize that the plumage of pheasant, kingfisher or gold merops are much more elegant than gopher speckles. But, I still would not trade my fur for the most elegant feathers. To each his own, right?

People have been learning about birds for a very long time. Ever since Aristotle, birds were the subject of scientists' attention. Eggs and bird embryos were described in 300 BC. In ancient Rome, the aristocracy gathered rich collections of live exotic birds. In the 13th Century Frederick II Deutsch in the 13th Century wrote a treatise (the so-called scientific work) on falconry and rearing birds in captivity.

Today the study of birds has become a matter of professional scholars, called ornithologists. But amateurs have great interest in birds as well: armed with a camera or cameras, people watch bird their life, collect pictures, and videos. I, incidentally, am also filming a movie. I am an underground filmmaker!

Nowadays there are many clubs, societies, and organizations whose members are not only observers of bird life, but trying to save many species of

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The Tale of the Rain Puddle

In an old quiet courtyard, just under a cherry tree, lived a great Rain Puddle. After each rain she lay in her hollow for a few days and rested ... and then dried up and went on to other wet affairs in distant countries. She always appeared unexpectedly, and disappeared just as suddenly. So one morning, the cherry tree had just barely managed to open her eyes and give a sweet cherry stretch, when she heard a familiar gruff voice:

"How long have you been asleep, dear? Spring has long been in the

yard, yet you have no leaves, no flowers."

"Hello, Rain Puddle! Excuse me, I slept so soundly that I did not hear the rain during the night."

And Cherry stole an inspection of herself. Rain Pool told the truth: all was still just bare twigs, with not a single leaf.

Starling Timoshka, who lived on the old poplar, had long been awake. She brushed the winter litter from her nesting box, dragged fresh shoots to it straight from the flower beds, and now sat on a branch and thoroughly cleaned her beak of all the dirt from the morning's work. Then she flew to Rain Puddle, jumped around to choose the most comfortable place, and began to drink the water, throwing back her head and closing her eyes with pleasure. Puddle looked at her and smiled, with reflections of the bright white clouds overhead.

Then in flew a flock of noisy, pugnacious sparrows. With loud chirping, they went swimming and splashing a long time, and finally flew away wet

and heavy from the water. Some old fishermen came to Rain Puddle and began to wash their waders. The dirt built up and Puddle cried indignantly:

"Outrageous! Stop smearing my water! Incidentally, there differences between bathing and drinking! Where could you have gotten so much dirt?" Rain Puddle tried to move away in disgust.

"We went fishing," said the old waders. "Then the rain hit. And it is not dirt at all — just clay."

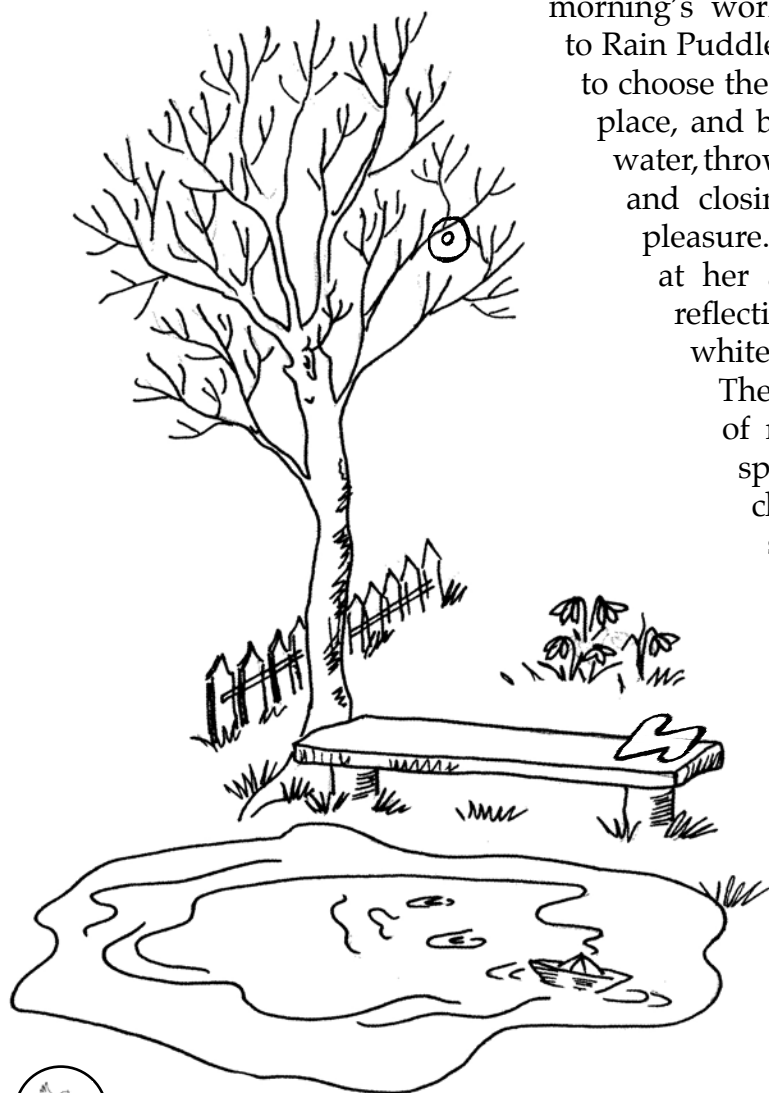
"Well, wash then! Just wash well, so I am not ashamed for you. Come on, turn around. I will look at you from all sides!" commanded Puddle. "Well, now that you're clean, you can go. Did you even catch a lot of fish?"

"More than enough! Thank you, Puddle!" said the fishermen and loudly stamping, they went to the house.

After lunch, the children ran into the yard. They immediately went to the Rain Puddle to measure its depth, and to sail paper boats.

All sincerely rejoiced in Rain Puddle. And she was pleased that everyone likes her, everybody needed her. Puddle was not even upset by Red Cat, who silently and carefully avoided the puddle, not even responding to her greeting.

When evening came and the yard was empty and quiet, Rain Puddle lay back and began to consider the stars in the sky before going to sleep. This was her favorite pastime. But suddenly she heard someone crying. Puddle listened. Cherry was crying! Rain Puddle



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"The Puddle"

could not stand the salty rain from someone's eyes, so she immediately began to question Cherry about what her so upset.

"I have such trouble," complained Cherry, with tears. "I do everything I can but I do not flourish. The sun warmed me, and the rain poured down, and the bees flew many times already. But the buds on my shoots are so fast asleep that they do not hear the call to awaken. The Red Cat said yesterday that I must have dried up!"

"Nonsense!" Rain Pool said. "Can dry wood cry? You live, Cherry! You're just a little late. When I swam here in the rain cloud, I saw a lot of flowering cherries. Yes, it's long past time to blossom. But do not be upset, I can help you. I know how to do it."

Rain Puddle and Cherry spent a long time whispering about something. The next day, Puddle was silent all day long. She had no time to waste on empty talk — she was very busy. She lay in her hollow, and basked in the sun. You might have thought that Puddle was just being lazy, but that was not the case. Bright sun warmed the water, and this was sent

directly to Cherry's roots. Cherry diligently drank this water. Rain water from puddles, soaked in the rays of the sun becomes a magic potion: it spreads around the trunk of a cherry tree and spreads to all its branches and twigs. For three days Rain Puddle fed Cherry. And not in vain: buds formed on all Cherry's branches, swelled and burst! Green leaves began to appear, and delicate pinky-white flower buds.

And the morning came when Starling Timoshka looked out of the birdhouse and whistled in amazement. There, clad in a white

lace of flowers, stood Cherry in all her glory! "Cherry-blossom! Cherry blossom!" chirped the Sparrows. The Old Poplar smiled; children shouted and danced. Red Cat, seeing fancy Cherry, stared in amazement with his green eyes. But, remembering his feline dignity, he turned up his nose and sauntered away.

"Thank you, Rain Puddle!" said happy Cherry.

"To your health, and until the next rain!" whispered a drop of water ... all that remained of Rain Puddle, as she disappeared into the wet ground.



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"International Bird Day"

birds from destruction. I recall the sad story of white heron feathers which used to adorn women's hats. Today this bird would no longer exist on Earth if not for the efforts of the Audubon Society for the Conservation of Nature. It is a beautiful snow-white Society, for the protection of animals against extinction, against the vagaries of fashion.

And although the number of birds on earth is great, estimated by some U.S. bird scholars as more than 100 billion (which is 25 times more than the number of people), the human being is the main cause of extinction of many bird species from our planet.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, nearly 100 bird species have disappeared forever, and more than 150 species are on the brink of extinction.

In order to keep these flying and singing ornaments of our planet, on April 1 nature lovers celebrate the International Day of Birds. I invite you, the readers of "Odnazhdi", to take part in this international effort. Read about the birds, draw a wall poster, do a game with contests, prepare talks, exhibitions - there are many ways to draw the attention of your friends to this group of living beings that are so interesting and so very necessary in nature.





Hello, dear readers. My name is Lyutra Lyutrovna. I am a River Otter. And these are my students. They are now struggling amongst themselves, and I can not really get their attention. They keep fighting and fighting, so I will try to introduce you to them right now. Here's this one called Ardiva, who is caught in someone else's paw. This one, being bitten on the ear, is called Snapper. And this one, who is

chewing on Ardiv and pulling Snapper's tail, is called Lelik. I may have them mixed up, but it is not important. They are constantly connected by paws, tails and ears.

But today I and the other otters have prepared a small task for you. We urgently need to help the postman. He has a letter in his mailbag without the exact address and name of the addressee, who is an inhabitant of the Danube Delta. Please read carefully the following inscription on the envelope and determine who needs to receive this letter. I will give you a little hint: The word consists of these 9 letters:

Д - О - О - О - Р - И - З - К - М

These letters can be found in the drawings, throughout this newspaper edition. Just look carefully: I hid them well! So, go for it, guys. And you, Snapper, have a conscience! Lying will not get you

anywhere! Lelik, you found one letter? But you ate it? Well, do not worry, one little letter will not cause a stomach ache.

The inscription on the envelope:

River.... The slope of a clay bank....

On the slope of the hole... In the burrow nest, lined with small fish's bones.

Please give this mail to the owner of that nest. We invite him to a beauty contest.

ECOLOGY HOLIDAYS

March 22

International Day of Water

APRIL 1

International Day of Birds

April 22

EARTH DAY

June 5

International Day of The Environment

June 8

International Day of the Oceans

June 29

International Day of the Danube

July 12

Anniversary of the
Danube Biosphere Reserve

August 28-29

European Night of the Bat

"Spring Rabbit"



News From The Bookshelf

by Spider "Eight Eyes"
Vosmiglazka Vosminozhkin

Today we have news! Or rather, we have been brought something new.. brought in and placed right next to me! Or rather, almost got put directly ON me. Thanks to my eight legs, I managed to avoid being squished. Whew!

And then I smiled at her, and she was friendly too, and we immediately became friends. At first we did not understand each other, because this "something new" does not know the Russian

language. But then she realized she could show me their pictures, and everything became clear.

My new friend is a storyteller. She knows the remarkable story of a rabbit called "Draggle-tail" who would very much like to have brothers and sisters. So much so that he built a little 'brother' from twigs. But the cold autumn wind broke its construction. In winter, he fashioned a brother from snow but it melted, and in spring a 'brother' made of mud went limp in the rain.

You want to know how this story of the lonely rabbit ends? Come to the library shelves and meet my new friend. Just bring your English dictionary: my friend is the keeper of the tale "Spring Rabbit" in English! The tale is by Joyce Dunbar, and the great pictures are created by Susan Verley. Come over soon, we are waiting for you!

But please be careful and do not tear my cobweb or shake me when you are rummaging through the bookshelf!

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